

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 stand rejected. Claims 1-40 remain pending in this patent application. Applicants respectfully request further examination and reconsideration in view of the arguments set forth below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the patent application by the current amendments. The attached pages are captioned "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made." Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is introduced as a result of these amendments.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

Claims 1-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, Claims 1, 17 and 30 recite "a vertical cavity that is adapted to align". The Applicants have herein amended Claims 1, 17 and 30 to delete the "adapted to" language from them. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claims 1-40 particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention thereby satisfying 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused the Examiner.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

Claims 1 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Calandrello et al., US Patent Number 4,439,647 (hereinafter Calandrello). Additionally, Claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12-14, 17, 23-25, 28-30, 33-37 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Brick et al., US Patent Number 6,172,620 (hereinafter Brick). The Applicants have reviewed the Calandrello and Brick references and, for the following rationale, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not anticipated by the Calandrello reference nor the Brick reference.

CLAIM 1

Applicants respectfully contend that the Calandrello reference fails to teach or suggest a removable button module as recited in amended independent Claim 1. For instance, amended Claim 1 recites in part (emphasis added):

wherein said removable button module is for removably attaching to said portable computing device to cover said button of said portable computing device, said membrane layer disposed above said button frame module when said removable button module is attached to said portable computing device.

Applicants respectfully assert that the Calandrello reference does not teach or suggest a removable button module that is for removably attaching to a portable computing device as specifically recited in amended Claim 1. Since the Calandrello reference fails to teach or suggest an element recited within amended Claim 1, Applicants

respectfully contend that the Calandrello reference cannot anticipate the present invention recited in amended Claim 1.

Based on the above rationale, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 1 is not anticipated by the Calandrello reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 is allowable over the Calandrello reference.

CLAIMS 1, 17 and 30

Applicants respectfully assert that the Brick reference fails to teach or suggest a removable button module as recited in amended independent Claims 1, 17 and 30. For instance, amended Claim 1 recites in part (emphasis added):

wherein said removable button module is for removably attaching to said portable computing device to cover said button of said portable computing device, said membrane layer disposed above said button frame module when said removable button module is attached to said portable computing device.

Applicants respectfully contend that the Brick reference does not teach or suggest a removable button module having a membrane layer disposed above the button frame module as specifically recited in amended Claims 1, 17 and 30. Since the Brick reference fails to teach or suggest an element recited within amended Claims 1, 17 and 30, Applicants respectfully assert that the Brick reference cannot anticipate the present invention recited in amended Claims 1, 17 and 30.

Based on the above rationale, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 17 and 30 are not anticipated by the Brick reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit Claims 1, 17 and 30 are allowable over the Brick reference.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above listed remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of rejected Claims 1-40.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

WAGNER, MURABITO & HAO LLP

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Thomas M. Catale
Registration No.: 46,434

WAGNER, MURABITO & HAO LLP
Two North Market Street, Third Floor
San Jose, CA 95113

Voice: (408) 938-9060
Facsimile: (408) 938-9069

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

The paragraph beginning on page 4, line 2, was amended as follows:

Accordingly, a need exists for a method and apparatus that provides a seal for the buttons of a personal digital assistant that restricts dirt, grim, and other foreign particles from getting underneath them. Embodiments of the [The] present invention provide[s] a method and apparatus which accomplish[es] the above mentioned need.

The paragraph beginning on page 5, line 21, and ending on page 6, line 4, was amended as follows:

In another embodiment, the present invention includes a removable button module for covering a button of a portable computing device. The removable button module includes a button frame module forming a [vertical] cavity that [is adapted to] aligns with the button of the portable computing device. Furthermore, the removable button module includes a membrane layer disposed on an outer side of the button frame module and covering an opening of the [vertical] cavity. It is understood that the removable button module is for attaching to the portable computing device to cover the button of the portable computing device. The membrane layer is disposed above the button frame module when the removable button module is attached to the portable computing device to cover the button.

The paragraph beginning on page 6, line 9, was amended as follows:

FIGURE 2A is a top side perspective view of an exemplary personal digital assistant computer system.

The paragraph beginning on page 6, line 21, was amended as follows:

FIGURE 5 is a logical block diagram of exemplary circuitry of the personal digital assistant of Figure 2A.

The paragraph beginning on page 22, line 15, was amended as follows:

Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention provide[s] a method and apparatus that provide[s] a seal for the buttons of a personal digital assistant device that restricts dirt, grim, and other foreign particles from getting underneath them.

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-17 and 30 were amended as shown below:

1. (Once Amended) A removable button module for covering a button of a portable computing device, said removable button module comprising:

a button frame module forming a [vertical] cavity that [is adapted to] aligns with said button of said portable computing device; and

a membrane layer disposed on an outer side of said button frame module and covering an opening of said [vertical] cavity;

wherein said removable button module is for removably attaching to said portable computing device to cover said button of said portable computing device, said

membrane layer disposed above said button frame module when said removable button module is attached to said portable computing device.

2. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a thermo-plastic urethane (TPU).

3. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a thermo-plastic elastomer (TPE).

4. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a silicone.

5. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a rubber.

6. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a leather.

7. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a nylon.

8. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said button frame module comprises a polycarbonite.

9. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said button frame module comprises a plastic.

10. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said button frame module comprises a metal.

11. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said button frame module comprises an alloy.

12. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said button frame module comprises a nylon.

13. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said membrane layer comprises a portion that extends underneath a power button of said portable computing device that supplies a return force to said power button after it has been depressed [comprises a personal digital assistant (PDA)].

14. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said removable button module couples to a top cover of said portable computing device.

15. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said removable button module couples to a midframe of said portable computing device.

16. (Once Amended) The removable button module as described in Claim 1 wherein said removable button module couples to a rear cover of said portable computing device.

17. (Once Amended) A removable button module for covering a button of a portable computing device, said removable button module comprising:

a button frame module forming a [vertical] cavity that [is adapted to] aligns with said button of said portable computing device; and

a membrane layer disposed on an outer side of said button frame module and covering an opening of said [vertical] cavity;

wherein said removable button module is for removably attaching to said portable computing device to cover said button of said portable computing device and to personalize said portable computing device, said membrane layer disposed above said button frame module when said removable button module is attached to said portable computing device.

30. (Once Amended) A removable button module for covering a button of a personal digital assistant, said removable button module comprising:

a button frame module forming a vertical hole [cavity] that [is adapted to] aligns with and accepts said button of said personal digital assistant; and

a membrane layer disposed on an outer side of said button frame module and covering an opening of said vertical hole [cavity];

wherein said removable button module is for removably attaching to said personal digital assistant to cover said button of said personal digital assistant, said membrane layer disposed above said button frame module when said removable button module is attached to said personal digital assistant.